

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A network and method for efficiently and effectively acquiring broadcast content, such as multimedia data, from content providers and delivering the acquired content to end users via a tiered network to minimize congestion during content delivery to thus provide high quality of service. The network and method employs a tiered Internet-based network that is served by a hybrid satellite/optical fiber data distribution network. The network includes a data center to which data, such as streaming video, audio or multimedia data, is provided over a content acquisition network by content providers. The data center uplinks the data to at least one satellite, such as a geosynchronous earth orbit (GEO) satellite, and over an Internet or asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) network, which distributes the data to the servers in the tiered network. The tiered network in this example comprises three tiers, although any number of tiers is acceptable. The three tiers are referred to respectively as master data centers (master data center tier), regional data centers (regional data center tier), and media serving centers (media serving center tier) that are interconnected by a private asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) network. A data director in the data center in cooperation with the ATM network determines which tier of servers can best fulfill a data request by an end user while minimizing the amount of hops required to provide such data.